

SENATE RECORD VOTE ANALYSIS

104th Congress
1st Session

Vote No. 217

May 25, 1995, 1:20 p.m.
Page S-7425 Temp. Record

BUDGET RESOLUTION/Elimination of the Defense Firewall

SUBJECT: Senate Concurrent Budget Resolution for fiscal years 1996-2002 . . . S. Con. Res. 13. Domenici motion to table the Exon (for Simon/Bumpers) amendment No. 1187.

ACTION: MOTION TO TABLE AGREED TO, 65-33

SYNOPSIS: As reported, S. Con. Res. 13, the fiscal year 1996 Concurrent Budget Resolution, will reduce projected spending over 7 years to balance the budget by fiscal year (FY) 2002 without increasing taxes. Savings that will accrue from lower debt service payments (an estimated \$170 billion) will be dedicated to a reserve fund, which may be used for tax reductions after enactment of laws to ensure a balanced budget. Highlights include the following: the rate of growth in Medicare will be slowed to 7.1 percent; Medicaid's rate of growth will be slowed to 5 percent and it will be transformed into a block grant program; the Commerce Department and more than 100 other Federal programs, agencies, and commissions will be eliminated; welfare and housing programs will be reformed; agriculture, energy, and transportation subsidies will be cut; foreign aid will be cut; defense spending will be cut and then allowed to increase back to its 1995 level; and Social Security will not be altered.

The Exon (for Simon/Bumpers) amendment would eliminate the separate spending caps for defense and nondefense spending, and would insert in lieu thereof a spending cap for each year that would apply to all spending. (The effect of the amendment would be to make it possible to transfer defense funds to nondefense programs by a simple majority vote. Under the resolution, such a transfer would be subject to a three-fifths majority (60) vote point of order.)

The amendment was offered after all debate time had expired. However, some statements on amendments were added to the record or were made before the amendments were offered and before debate time had expired. Also, by unanimous consent, 1 minute of time was allowed on each amendment for explanatory statements before each vote. Senator Domenici moved to table the amendment. Generally, those favoring the motion to table opposed the amendment; those opposing the motion to table favored the amendment.

Those favoring the motion to table contended:

(See other side)

YEAS (65)			NAYS (33)			NOT VOTING (2)	
Republicans (51 or 96%)		Democrats (14 or 31%)	Republicans (2 or 4%)	Democrats (31 or 69%)		Republicans (1)	Democrats (1)
Abraham	Helms	Baucus	Hatfield	Akaka	Kennedy	Kassebaum- ²	Mikulski- ²
Ashcroft	Hutchison	Bingaman	Jeffords	Biden	Kerry		
Bennett	Inhofe	Bryan		Boxer	Kohl		
Bond	Kempthorne	Exon		Bradley	Lautenberg		
Brown	Kyl	Feinstein		Breaux	Leahy		
Burns	Lott	Ford		Bumpers	Levin		
Campbell	Lugar	Glenn		Byrd	Moseley-Braun		
Chafee	Mack	Graham		Conrad	Moynihan		
Coats	McCain	Heflin		Daschle	Murray		
Cochran	McConnell	Inouye		Dodd	Pell		
Cohen	Murkowski	Kerrey		Dorgan	Pryor		
Coverdell	Nickles	Lieberman		Feingold	Reid		
Craig	Packwood	Nunn		Harkin	Rockefeller		
D'Amato	Pressler	Robb		Hollings	Sarbanes		
DeWine	Roth			Johnston	Simon		
Dole	Santorum				Wellstone		
Domenici	Shelby						
Faircloth	Simpson						
Frist	Smith						
Gorton	Snowe						
Gramm	Specter						
Grams	Stevens						
Grassley	Thomas						
Gregg	Thompson						
Hatch	Thurmond						
	Warner						

EXPLANATION OF ABSENCE:

1—Official Business
2—Necessarily Absent
3—Illness
4—Other

SYMBOLS:

AY—Announced Yea
AN—Announced Nay
PY—Paired Yea
PN—Paired Nay

The defense budget has been cut by 35 percent in real terms over the past 10 years. Procurement efforts that are needed to keep our forces modernized have virtually seized. Readiness levels have slipped to Carter-era lows. According to the Bottom-Up review, we are already underfunding the minimum force we need to defend our interests by \$150 billion. This resolution will not solve that problem--it will allow the decline to continue for the next 7 years. Despite this alarming level of underfunding, despite the numerous, and serious, military dangers that still exist in the world, whether in the Middle East, North Korea, or Central Europe, and despite the numerous smaller trouble spots to which President Clinton has shown a remarkable willingness to send our Armed Forces, some Senators still think that defense spending is too high. These Senators have proposed this amendment to stop the reestablishment of a three-fifth majority vote requirement to raid the defense budget. Their opposition to reestablishing this requirement is understandable; in years past, it often proved effective in blocking their attempts to use the Defense Department as a piggy bank for all their social spending proposals. If it had not been for the existence of that firewall, our Nation's defenses would be in even greater disrepair than they are now. If we do not reestablish that firewall, our Nation's security will almost certainly be further weakened. We therefore strongly support the motion to table the Simon/Bumpers amendment.

Those opposing the motion to table contended:

The Simon/Bumpers amendment is not a raid on the defense budget, as some Senators may believe. Instead, the amendment has been offered on the simple principle that in this era of tight budget constraints Senators should have the maximum flexibility possible to set spending priorities. If a majority of Senators believe that it is appropriate to decrease defense spending in order to increase Medicaid or other welfare spending, then they should be able to do so; a three-fifths majority vote should not be required. Similarly, if a majority of Senators wish to eliminate the Space Station in order to pay for more environmental restoration at defense sites, then they should have that option. We never supported the arbitrary firewall between defense and nondefense spending when we had it before, and we certainly do not support putting that firewall back up now. We therefore are opposed to the motion to table the Simon/Bumpers amendment.